

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MONTER 00832 062107Z

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ACTION SCSE-00

INFO OCT-01 ARA-10 ISO-00 SCA-01 L-03 H-02 DHA-02 /019 W

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R 061630Z NOV 75

FM AMCONSUL MONTERREY

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2064

INFO AMEMBASSY MEXICO

UNCLAS MONTERREY 0832

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: CASC, MX

SUBJ: CASE REVIEW OF ALL AMERICAN PRISONERS IN MEXICO (CHENOWETH,
DALE)

REF: STATE 194199, 253823 AND 257753

1. ALLEGATIONS OF MISTREATMENT: SUBJECT INFORMED US HE RECEIVED AT TIME OF ARREST WHAT HE TERMED "ROUGH HANDLING". CONOFF RAISED MATTER WITH DISTRICT ATTORNEY, WHO DENIED ANY MISTREATMENT. WHEN CONOFF RAISED ALLEGED ROUGH HANDLING WITH DISTRICT JUDGE, JUDGE STATED CHENOWETH APPEARED MENTALLY UNBALANCED PROBABLY DUE TO USE OF PEYOTE. NO FURTHER ACTION CONTEMPLATED.

2. LACK OF NOTIFICATION: SUBJECT ARRESTED APRIL 10. CONOFF LEARNED OF INCARCERATION FROM NEWSPAPER APRIL 15. CONOFF MADE STRONG ORAL PROTEST TO FEDERAL DISTRICT ATTORNEY RE LACK OF NOTIFICATION AND BROUGHT TO HIS ATTENTION JULY 1974 NOTE FROM MEXICAN OFFICE OF FOREIGN RELATIONS INSTRUCTING COMPETENT OFFICIALS TO MAKE APPROPRIATE NOTIFICATION. SUBJECT STATED HE DID NOT REQUEST COMMUNICATE WITH AMCONSUL.

3. CHENOWETH REPORTED UNHEALTHFUL CONDITIONS IN PIEDRAS NEGRAS CITY JAIL, THAT THERE WERE EIGHT MEN IN CELL DESIGNED FOR FOUR. EXCEPT FOR DAILY SHOWER UNDER GUARD, SUBJECT FORCED REMAIN IN CROWDED CELL REMAINDER OF TIME. CELL HAD NEITHER LIGHT NOR WINDOW AND HAD FOUL AIR FOR LACK OF VENTILATION. CONOFF CALLED ON MAYOR PROTESTING DEPLORABLE CONDITIONS THAT FACILITY. MAYOR ARRANGED HAVE LIGHT INSTALLED IN CELL DURING CONOFF'S VISIT AND
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MADB ARRANGEMENTS INSTALL AIR COOLERS TO IMPROVE VENTILATION.

MAYOR INFORMED CONOFF THAT PENITENTIARY ALREADY OVERCROWDED AND NO SUITABLE ACCOMMODATIONS AVAILABLE ELSEWHERE. CONSTRUCTION OF NEW CITY PRISON CONTEMPLATED BUT STILL IN BLUE PRINT STAGE. ONLY FORSEEABLE RELIEF WOULD COME WITH COMPLETION NEW PENITENTIARY IN SALTILLO IN DECEMBER 1975 WHEN SOME PRISONERS WILL BE TRANSFERRED THERE. CONOFF DISCUSSED WITH MAYOR POSSIBILITY THAT DURING INTERIM PERIOD SOME AMERICAN PRISONERS COULD RECEIVE TWO-WEEK ROTATIONAL TRANSFERS FROM LOCAL OVERCROWDED JAIL TO PENITENTIARY TO TAKE ADVANTAGENXF OUTDOOR EXERCISE AND SUNSHINE. CONOFF ALSO SUGGESTED REINFORCING GUARD AND REPAIRING FENCE AROUND CITY JAIL TO PERMIT EXCERCISE IN COURTYARD WITH MINIMUM RISK OF ESCAPE, SINCE RIVER IS ONLY 150 METERS FROM THAT FACILITY. ON JULY 29 SUBJECT COMPLAINED OF DEGNERATING HEALTH AND TOOTHACHES DUE LACK OF SUNSHINE AND EXCERCISE. CONOFF BROUGHT NEED FOR DENTIST TO ATTENTION MAYOR SAME DATE, AND HE PROMISED ACTION. ON SEPTEMBER 28 SUBJECT AGAIN REQUESTED DENTIST. CONOFF CONTACTED MAYOR WHO SAID HE WAS NOW OVERSEEING ALL MEDICAL AND DENTAL CARE AND THAT DENTIST WOULD B.

4. LACK OF INTERPRETER: CHENOWETH COMPLAINED THAT INTERPRETER DELIBERATELY MISINTERPRETED HIS STATEMENTS. CONOFF RAISED THIS MATTER WITH FEDERAL DISTRICT ATTORNEY WHO STATED THAT HIS DECLARATION WAS INTERPRETED BY OFFICIAL INTERPRETER EMPLOYED BY GOVERNMENT OF MEXICO. NO FURTHER ACTION CONTEMPLATED.

5. VISITATIONS: CHENOWETH HAS BEEN VISITED ON MONTHLY BASIS. SUCH VISITS WILL CONTINUE.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 06 NOV 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975MONTER00832
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750387-0068
From: MONTERREY
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19751168/aaaacjaw.tel
Line Count: 89
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION SCSE
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 STATE 194199
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ElyME
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 07 OCT 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <07 OCT 2003 by chicheje>; APPROVED <18 FEB 2004 by ElyME>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CASE REVIEW OF ALL AMERICAN PRISONERS IN MEXICO (CHENOWETH, DALE)
TAGS: CASC, MX, (CHENOWETH, DALE)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006